Dubai they have to go to Pakistan. And similarly, if a Pakistani wishes to come to India, he also has to come by the same route. So, can you give us some indication about the timeframe with which the flights would be resumed; and would also like to know from the hon. Minister the reasons for this delay?

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI: Sir, if you recall, the hon. Prime Minister had announced it in Parliament on 2nd May, 2003, that he had a telephonic disucussion with the Prime Minister of Pakistan on 28th April, 2003, where the restoration of air links was considered. In pursuance, and as a follow-up of that decision, a proposal has come from the Government of Pakistan, through its DGCA, for technical-level talks, the schedule of which I had mentioned just now. You will appreciate that it is a diplomatic process and looking at the relations that we have with Pakistan, it needs a thorough consideration of every step that we take, even restoration of air links. We are aware of the situaton and the inconvenience caused to the passengers. But the initiative of the hon. Prime Minister needs to be appreciated in this regard. And, in pursuance to his initiative, these steps are being taken.

Assistance to fiscal deficit States

*222. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to rescue the revenue deficit States from financial crisis;

(b) the State-wise financial condition at the moment; and

(c) the steps taken to assist the revenue deficit States for improving their financial condition?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government has initiated several measures in this regard. Apart from the release of non-plan revenue deficit grant as recommended by the Eleventh Finance Commision, Government of India also extends need-based assistance to States, so as to take care of temporary mismatch in their receipt and expenditures.

Further, in order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments towards fiscal consolidation, Government of India, has also created a "States' Fiscal Reforms Facility (2000-01 to 2004-05)". This facility provides incentives to States to undertake Medium-Term Fiscal Reforms Programme (MTFRP), which aims at reducing their revenue and gross fiscal deficits, over the reform period.

In addition, Government of India, has also introduced a debt-swap scheme to enable States to retire their high cost borrowings by taking advantage of the current low-interest regime.

Government of India has also assisted some State Governments to avail multilateral institutional funding for undertaking fiscal and structural reforms.

A Statement of financial position of States, in terms of Revenue and Gross Fiscal Deficit, for the year 2002-03, given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

Revenue & Gross Fiscal Deficit of States for the year 2002-03 RE/BE

(Rs. in Crores)

SI. No.	States	Revenue Deficit	Gross Fiscal Deficit
1	3	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	-2482	-7499
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	291	-169
3.	Assam	-973	-2250
4.	Bihar	-2457	-4911
5.	Chhatisgarh	-505	-1527
6.	Delhi	2032	-2574
7.	Goa	-104	-418
8.	Gujarat	-6201	-6798
9.	Haryana	-1086	-2203
10.	Himachal Pradesh	-1186	-1860
11.	Jammu & Kashmir	652	-1245
12.	Jharkhand	22	-1783
13.	Karnataka	-3405	-5399

1 2	3	4
14. Kerala	-1898	-2845
15. Madhya Pradesh	-95	-3249
16. Maharashtra	-5532	-9127
17. Manipur	-10	-451
18. Meghalaya	-41	-381
19. Mizoram	16	-137
20. Nagaland	90	-263
21. Orissa	-1460	-3181
22. Punjab	-3313	-4772
23. Rajasthan	-4075	-6505
24. Sikkim	232	-52
25. Tamil Nadu	-5917	-8106
26. Tripura	96	-283
27. Uttar Pradesh	-4957	-9685
28. Uttaranchal	-1194	-1844
29. West Bengal	-9301	-11991

SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, despite several steps, taken by the Central Government and the State Governments, the revenue deficit of the States is increasing because of their increasing revenue expenditure. A major portion of their revenue expenditure is consumed for making payments of interest components of their debts. Every year, their debt burden is increasing, which, again, result in the increase of revenue expenditure. Is the Central Government having any plan for waiving off their debts or giving some relief on interest, which can reduce their revenue expenditure and restore their physical health?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, the hon. Member wishes to know whether the Central Government is having any plan for waiving the debts of the States. No, Sir, we do not have any such plan. But we certainly have a debt-relief scheme for the States of the Union, about which the hon. Member is already aware. There are just two additional things that I would like to submit, here. One, barely in an hour from now, the House has to take up a full-fledged discussion on the financial situation of the States. I am, of course, ready to answer whatever question the hon.

Member has put, or, whatever question he might wish to put. But, as we are having a full-fledged discussion on this topic, it is preferable that this question may be treated as a part of that discussion. I am requesting it just to save the time of the House; otherwise I do not have any difficulty in answering to hon. Member's question.

Sir, there is also one personal request that I wish to make. I have been suffering for a long time because of these lights, meant for trapping flies and mosquitoes, that have been put on in the House. These are actually health hazard, because if we are not careful, a prolonged exposure to these lights may cause severe damage to our eyes. Of course, those, who sit in the central part of the House, don't face this difficulty because they have an advantage of constantly looking at you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will have to consult the Health Minister.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, these are blinding lights. They may cause severe damage to our eyes. I appeal to all the sections of the House to support for the removal of these lights. These lights can easily be replaced by a better technology.

SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Sir, my second supplementary is. ...*(Interruptions)*..

श्री सभापति: क्या करना है, डिबेट हो रही है।

श्री सुरेन्द्र लाठ: सभापति जी, मैं थोड़ा सा उड़ीसा के बारे में बोलना चाहता हूं।

Orissa has been suffering, for the last three consecutive years, because of natural calamities, such as, super-cyclone, floods and droughts. The State of Orissa is having the highest rate of persons living Below Poverty Line, that is, 48 per cent, whereas the national average is 26 per cent. Orissa is having huge natural resources, but they are not able to exploit them because of the financial constraints. Does the Central Government has any proposal to give some special package to help the State of Orissa in overcoming their financial constraints, so that Orissa can also stand on par with other developed States?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, this is a State-specific question, based on the fact that the State of Orissa had unfortunately, in the past, a series of natural calamities. We are very appreciative of the difficulties of the State of Orissa. But there are other States of the Union that had also had earthquake, cyclone, etc. Wherever there is a natural calamity of

this kind, we do have a National Calamity Relief Fund for their assistance. There are other provisions also whereby the States are assisted. It would be difficult to treat every State as a 'Special Category State'.

श्री सभापति: माननीय सदस्य, इसी प्रश्न के ऊपर आज शार्ट डयूरेशन डिसकशन होने वाला है।

श्री लालू प्रसाद: अभी थोड़ा-सा हो जाए।

श्री सभापति: उस समय सब डिटेल में हो जाएगा।

श्री सतीश प्रधान: नहीं सर, थोड़ा सा ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: उस समय सारा डिटेल में हो जाएगा।

श्री लालू प्रसाद: सभापति जी, इसमें सभी लोग भाग नहीं लेंगे।

श्री सभापति: आपको भाग लेना पड़ेगा। आप भागकर जा रहे हैं।

श्री लालू प्रसाद: हम तो ले रहे हैं । लेकिन उन्हें पहले सावधान कर रहे हैं, इससे उन्हें उस समय जवाब देने का टाइम मिल जाएगा।

श्री सभापति: आप उस समय बोलिएगा।

श्री लालू प्रसाद: हमारा नाम जोड़ लीजिए।

श्री सभापति: मैं आपका नाम जोड़ दूंगा। आप बैठ जाइए।

Take over of Pushkar Lake in Ajmer

*223. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to take over the Pushkar Lake in Ajmer for the development of tourist spots to attract domestic and foreign tourists; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

A preliminary notification under Section 4 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 has been issued